

Public Records Management:

Why Should I Care and What's In It For Me?



- Presenter:
- Steve Walker
- State Archivist

WHAT IS A PUBLIC RECORD?

Most states and local governments define a public record based on the following standard definition:

“Information that documents a transaction or activity by or with any public officer, agency or employee of state government or its political subdivisions.”

WHAT IS A PUBLIC RECORD?

“Regardless of physical form or characteristic, the recorded information is a public record if it is produced, collected, received or retained in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business”

IDAHO CODE 9-337

“Public record” includes, but is not limited to, any writing containing information relating to the conduct or administration of the public’s business prepared, owned, used or retained by any state agency, independent public body corporate and politic or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.

NEW TECHNOLOGY AND OLD VALUES

COMPUTER AND SCANNED RECORDS ARE STILL:

- Governed by law
- Governed by retention schedules
- Subject to access and copying

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RECORDS TO GOVERNMENT

- Among the most valuable resources of government
- Government officials could not carry out their work without records
- Institutional memory of government
- Public records document stewardship of rights, benefits, and services to the public
- Official legal documents
- Must be protected and maintained as long as needed

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RECORDS TO CITIZENS

- Documents citizen's rights and privileges
- Assists with understanding civic issues
- Provides accountability of government officials and agencies
- Provides economic and historical information

PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

TO PROVIDE:

- the right information...
- in the right format...
- at the right place...
- at the right time...
- to the right person...
- efficiently and at the lowest possible cost.

IDAHO CODE 9-338

Every person has a right to examine and take a copy of any public record of this state and there is a presumption that all public records in Idaho are open at all reasonable times for inspection except as otherwise expressly provided by statute.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF ACCESS

THE PUBLIC HAS A LEGAL RIGHT TO:

- Review public records
- Obtain copies of public records
- Review documented actions of government officials and employees
- Right of legal redress for denial of access to public records

PUBLIC RECORDS LEGALLY EXEMPT FROM DISCLOSURE

IDAHO CODE 9-340

- Court files of judicial proceedings
- Law enforcement records, investigatory records of agencies, worker's compensation
- Personnel records, personal information, health records, professional discipline
- Trade secrets, production records, appraisals, bids, proprietary information

PUBLIC RECORDS LEGALLY EXEMPT FROM DISCLOSURE

IDAHO CODE 9-340

- Archaeological, endangered species, libraries, licensing exams
- The material of a library, museum, or archive which has been contributed by a private person, to the extent of any limitation that is a condition of the contribution.
- Draft legislation and supporting materials, tax commission, petroleum clean water

EXEMPT AND NONEXEMPT PUBLIC RECORDS TO BE SEPARATED

IDAHO CODE 9-341

- If any public record contains material which is not exempt from disclosure as well as material which is exempt from disclosure, the public agency or independent public body corporate and politic shall, upon receipt of a request for disclosure, separate the exempt and nonexempt material and make the nonexempt material available for examination,....

**HOW MUCH TAX PAYER
MONEY IS BEING
WASTED THROUGH**



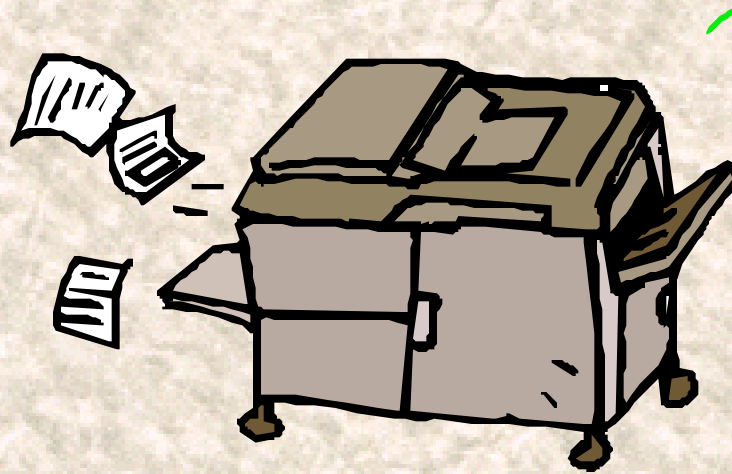
**IGNORANCE OF
PUBLIC RECORDS
MANAGEMENT?**

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



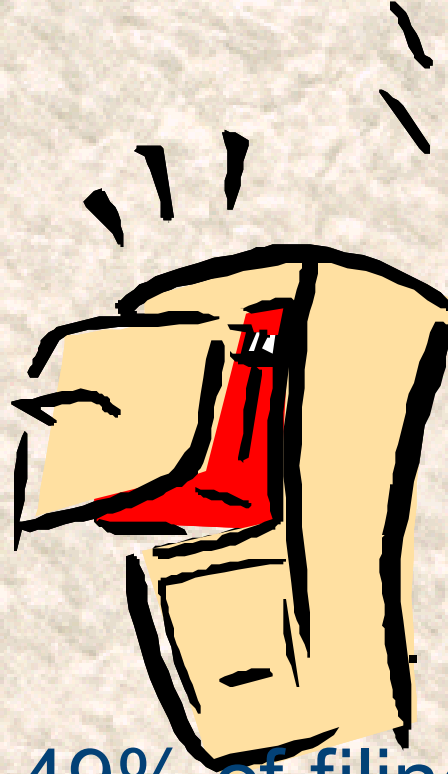
- Over Four Trillion (4,000,000,000,000) paper documents in U.S. today

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



- On Average, 19 copies are made of every original

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



- On Average, 49% of filing equipment space is used to store duplicate copies and records that have passed their legal retention

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



- On Average, staff NEVER refer to 88% of their records and 95% of references are made to records UNDER THREE YEARS OLD

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



- On Average, records in office files HAVE NOT been inventoried for at least six years, IF EVER!

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING



- It is estimated that 68 cents of every \$1.00 spent for record-making and filing is wasted due to poor records management practices!

PUBLIC RECORDKEEPING

What's in it for me?

- Improved protection of records
- Improved public service
- Cost saving / avoidance
- More accountability

AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CONSISTS OF:

- Developing written policies and procedures for managing records and information.
- Implementing filing and indexing systems and tools.
- Conducting an inventory of records.
- Establishing and following records retention schedules.

AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CONSISTS OF:

- Identifying and using technology appropriately to create, store and retrieve materials.
- Storing inactive records in a cost-effective and secure location.
- Destroying obsolete records in a timely and systematic manner and documenting their destruction.

AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CONSISTS OF:

- Identifying and preserving vital records (those that are essential to conducting and continuing business operations).
- Identifying and preserving archival (historic, permanent) records.
- Developing a disaster preparedness plan to protect and recover records in the event of a disaster.
- Developing forms to maintain efficient operations.

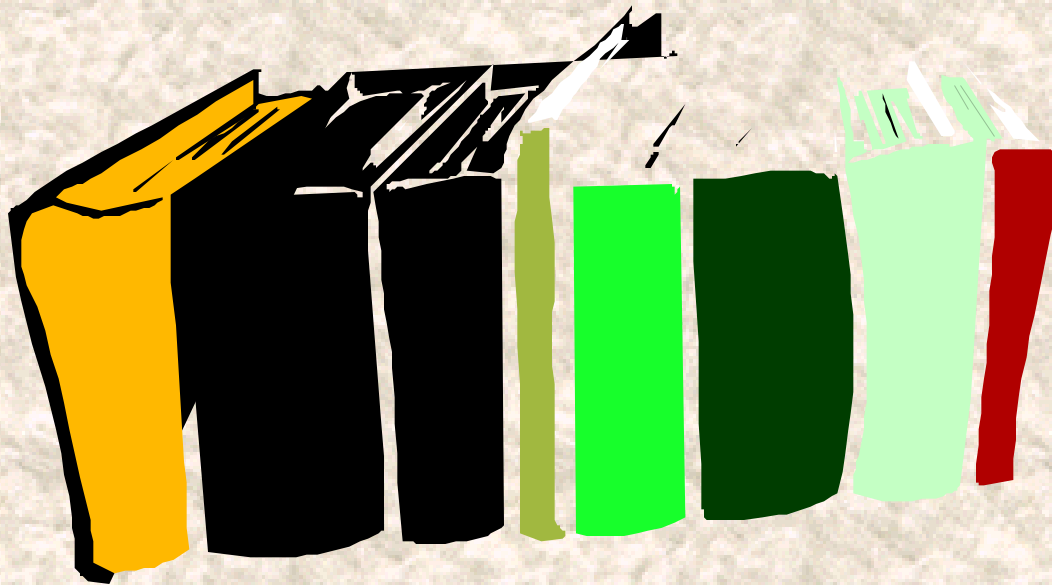
PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Locate what you need when you need it.
- Reduce the volume of records stored.
- Improve storage and retrieval systems.
- Increase efficiency of office operations.
- Reduce costs for equipment, supplies, space, and personnel.

PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Identify and protect vital records.
- Improve customer relations.
- Improve accountability of public funds.
- Reduce liability risks by keeping records according to an authorized retention schedule.
- Creates better attitude toward government by saving taxpayer money!

LIFE CYCLE OF A PUBLIC RECORD



- Creation
- Maintenance
- Disposition

CREATION



- Comprised of originating activities.
- It costs money to create records!

CREATING RECORDS COSTS MONEY



- A business letter costs an average of \$12 to produce.
- An engineering drawing costs between \$1400 to \$2200 to produce.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAVINGS
ARE PRESENT THROUGH THE**



**ELIMINATION OF REDUNDANT
AND USELESS RECORDS**

MAINTENANCE

- Composed of activities such as filing, labeling, boxing, retrieval and storage of records



- Cost effective, timely, and accurate retrieval of current records is a critical issue for staff and budget. Maintenance of outdated records can often be a luxury.

MEDIA CHARACTERISTICS AND SELECTION

- Paper quality - can last up to 15+ years even under poor conditions
- Preservation microfilm - for long-term retrieval (over 10 years)
- Scanning - for short-term reference (under 5 years)

FACTORS AFFECTING PAPER DURABILITY

- Handling by people
- Humidity
- Insect and rodent damage
- Light
- Temperature
- Storage conditions

FACTORS AFFECTING PRESERVATION MICROFILM

- Filming - resolution, density, focus, reduction ratio, order of images, targets and certification documents
- Processing - washing, Methylene Blue Test, Redox, duplication
- Inspection - yearly basis for selected percentage of random samples
- Use - Microfilm Reader/Reader-printer maintenance
- Storage - environmental conditions, silver and diazo NEVER stored in same area!

FACTORS AFFECTING SCANNED MATERIALS

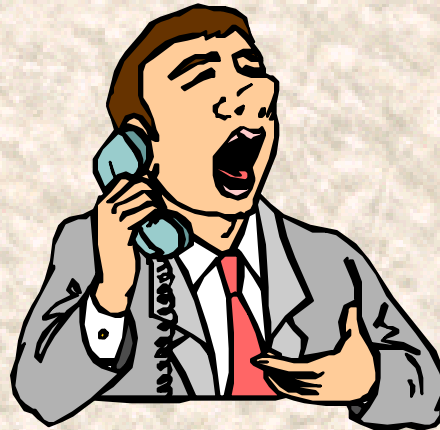
- Authenticity - metadata needed to verify, legal considerations
- Changing technology - new software versions, image compression ratios, incompatible hardware devices
- Dust and dirt
- Environmental conditions
- Inspection - yearly basis for selected percentage of random samples
- Light

FACTORS AFFECTING SCANNED MATERIALS

- Magnetic fields
- People
- Power fluxuations
- Resolution - dpi, color transmission, output size
- Static electricity
- Storage Conditions
- Viruses

INACTIVE RECORDS

DEFINITION:



- A file drawer or cubic foot records box that is referenced less than once per month

DISPOSITION

- Scheduled destruction of records once legal retention has been met.



- Transfer inactive permanent records out of valuable office space to:
the State Archives

CHAPTER 161 (H. B. No. 206)

AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING
CUSTODIANS OF STATE, COUNTY, CITY, OR
VILLAGE RECORDS OF HISTORICAL
SIGNIFICANCE AND NOT IN CURRENT USE TO
DELIVER THEM TO THE IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY FOR PERMANENT PRESERVATION;

PROVIDING FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SUCH
RECORDS BY THE IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY;

PROVIDING FOR THE APPROPRIATE DISPOSAL
OF OFFICIAL RECORDS WHICH POSSESS NO
SIGNIFICANCE, IMPORTANCE, NOR VALUE;

AUTHORIZING THE IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY TO REQUIRE AND SUPERVISE THE
COLLECTION OF HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT
STATE, COUNTY, CITY, OR VILLAGE ARCHIVES.

IDAHO SESSION LAWS, C. 161'47, pp. 416-417.

Approved March 12, 1947

- SECTION 1. The purpose of this act is to assign state archival authority to the Idaho State Historical Society; to establish unified state archives in order to preserve and protect the historically important state, county, city, and village archives, and thus facilitate the use of Idaho records for official reference and historical research.

IDAHO CODE 67-4126

- 6. To facilitate the use of Idaho records for official reference and historical research.
- 7. To accept from any state, county, or city, or any public official, any official books, records, documents, original papers, newspaper files, printed books, or portraits, not in current use....

IDAHO CODE 67-4126

- 7. ...When such documents are so accepted, copies therefrom shall be made and certified under the seal of the society upon application of any person, which person shall pay for such copies reasonable fees established by the society.
- 8. To require that any state, county, or city, or any public official, deposit official books, records, documents, or original papers, not in current use, which are of definite historical importance, in the society for preservation...

IDAHO CODE 67-4126

- 8. ...and to provide methods whereby such materials, which have no significance, may be destroyed.
- 9. To establish such rules and regulations as may be necessary to discharge the duties of the society.
- 10. To employ such personnel as may be necessary for the administration of its duties in accordance with the standards prescribed by the personnel commission.
- 11. To have and use an official seal.

PROTECTION OF RECORDS

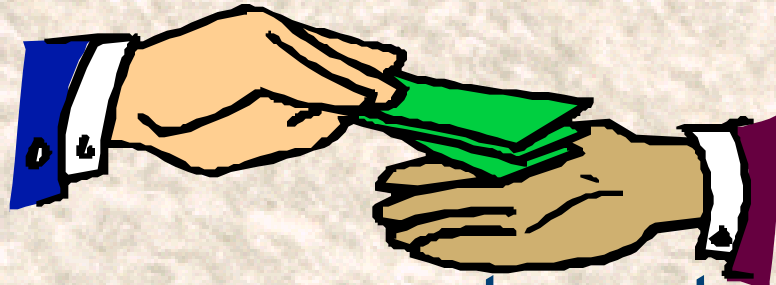
- All records need protection from people, environment, and potential disasters
- Impossible to provide full protection for all types of records
- Records classified in priority of administrative, fiscal, legal, and historical value
- Vital records have the highest priority

SECURITY OF RECORDS

- Alarm system
- Helpful personnel who also keep an eye on the records
- Limit access
- Locks
- No windows
- Vaults - Paper materials, film, magnetic media

RECORDS STORAGE SUMMARY

- Leaves good audit trail
- Practices good records management



- Provides easy access to materials
- Provides 24-hour seven day a week security
- Saves money

POTENTIAL DISASTERS

- EARTHQUAKES
- FIRES
- NEGLIGENCE
- TERRORISM
- WATER
- WIND

ORGANIZING DISASTER RECOVERY

- Who is in charge?
- Where will alternative offices be found?
- Are recovery experts needed?
- Where can microfilm readers and printers be found?
- Where can replacement computer hardware and software be found?
- How much time is needed to re-start operations?

SALVAGING DAMAGED RECORDS

- Contact State Archives immediately
- Salvage operations are complex – use experts
- Insurance may pay part of cost
- Document the process
- Limit process to vital records

FIRE PREVENTION

- < Alarm system
- < Columns
- < Doors
- < Extinguishers
- < Inspection
- < Roof
- < Smoke and fire detection
- < Sprinkler system
- < Testing
- < Walls

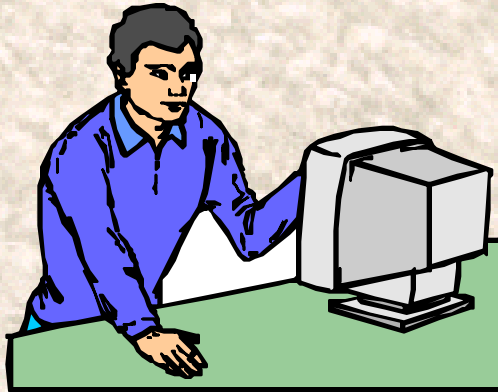
SALVAGING WATER DAMAGED PAPER RECORDS

- Start recovery efforts immediately
- Separate dry materials from wet materials
- Freeze records
- Handle with care
- Utilize ventilated storage containers

SALVAGING WATER DAMAGED MICROFILM

- Do NOT allow film to dry - emulsion will pull away from film
- Place film in a plastic container of distilled water
- Send to experts for reprocessing

SALVAGING WATER DAMAGED COMPUTER MATERIALS



- Disks, CD's, and all magnetic media should be recovered by experts
- If caught soon, enough most materials can be salvaged

VACUUM FREEZE-DRYING

- Reduces the damaging effects of water
- Removes excess moisture
- Private companies have mobile vacuum chambers that can be on-site of the disaster

WATER DAMAGE RECOVERY HINTS

- Have good air circulation, portable fans
- Use slow drying method
- Place books and ledgers spine down during slow drying process
- Archival materials and vital records should be highest priority for freezing
- Remove mud and debris

DISASTER PLANNING AND RECOVERY

- DISASTERS ARE NOT PLANNED
- DAMAGE TO RECORDS IS OFTEN UNINTENTIONAL
- MOST GOVERNMENTS DO NOT HAVE A UPDATED DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN
- DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN AND VITAL RECORDS PROTECTION ARE CLOSELY RELATED

HOW TO DETERMINE WHAT ARE VITAL RECORDS

- Could work be carried on without these records?
- What would be the consequences if the records were lost?
- Would the public suffer serious loss or be inconvenienced if the records were lost?
- How much would it cost to reconstruct the records?
- Is the document itself essential or only the information it contains?

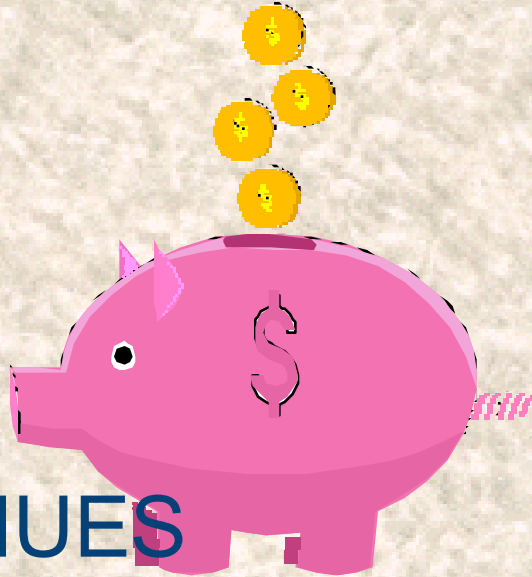
VITAL RECORDS

- Authorize government operations
- Are essential to the continuity of government operations
- Document government receivable
- Document government obligations
- Document citizen and property rights
- Document ownership of property

VITAL RECORDS

- All permanent (archival) records are vital records, but not all vital records are permanent
- Only seven to ten percent of public records may be vital
- Only three to five percent of public records may be permanent (archival with enduring value)

CONSEQUENCES OF LOST VITAL RECORDS



- LOST REVENUES
- UNEXPECTED COSTS
- DISRUPTION TO OPERATIONS
- IMPACT ON CITIZENS

PROTECTING VITAL RECORDS

- Built-in dispersal - standard operating procedure
- Improvised dispersal - for protection purposes
- On-site or off-site storage

BUILT-IN DISPERSAL (STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE)

- **OTHER BUILDINGS**
- **FORWARD TO OTHER
GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES**
- **ROUTINELY MICROFILM**

IMPROVISED DISPERSAL

- INTENTIONAL PROCESS OF PROTECTION
- SHORT TERM DUPLICATES MAY NEED TO BE CREATED SUCH AS FAX COPIES OR PHOTOCOPIES
- LONG TERM DUPLICATES MAY NEED TO BE CREATED SUCH AS SECURITY MICROFILM

ON-SITE STORAGE

- FIRE RESISTANT VAULTS, FILE CABINETS, AND SAFES ARE EXPENSIVE
- ONLY ONE COPY OF RECORD MAY EXIST
- LOSS OR MISFILING THROUGH FREQUENT USE
- MAY NOT PROTECT AGAINST WATER DAMAGE, FIRE, OR OTHER HAZARDS

OFF-SITE STORAGE

- EXPENSE OF SECURITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND STORAGE
- EXPENSE OF RETRIEVAL AND REFILING OF RECORDS
- AVAILABILITY, SECURITY AND EXPENSE OF TRANSMISSION OF RECORDS

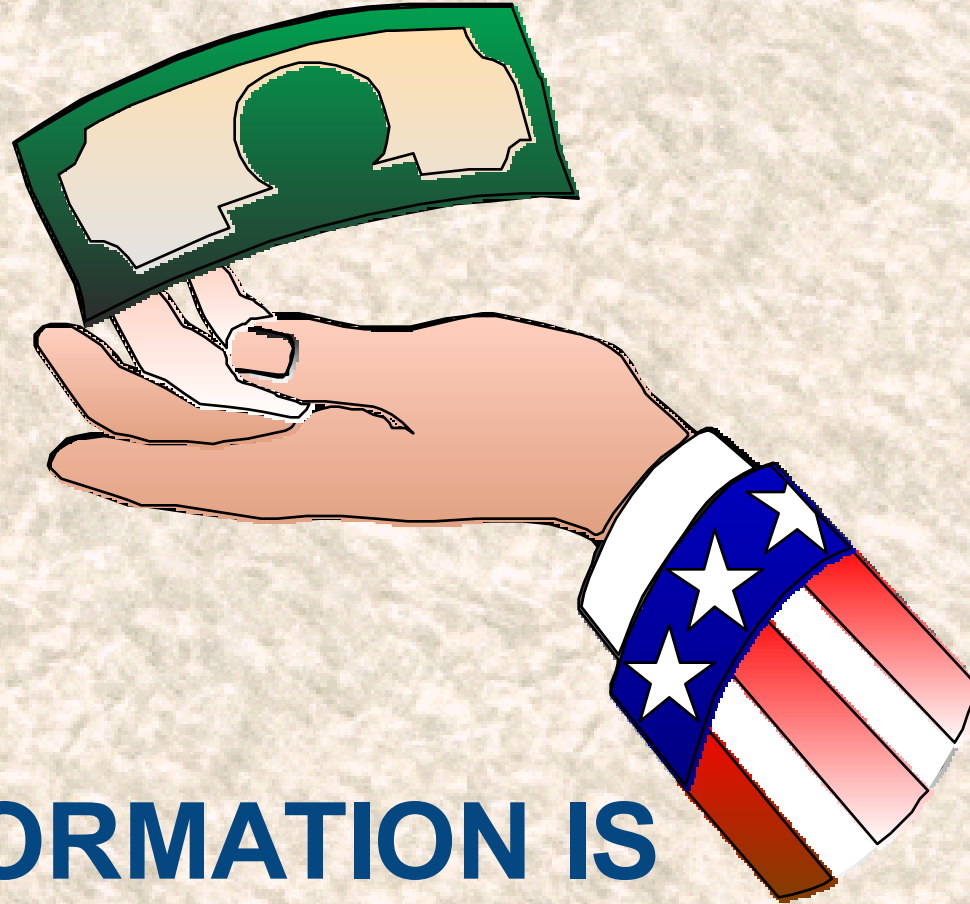
THE VITAL PUBLIC RECORDS PROTECTION PLAN

- Should be formally adopted by the governing body
- Copies should be distributed to relevant parties
- Consider including protective measures in retention schedule

A SUMMARY OF PROTECTING PUBLIC RECORDS

- An essential component of sound administration
- Promotes government's ability to serve its citizens
- Protects legal rights
- Preserves records for the future
- Requires analysis of costs versus benefits

GOOD MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS AND



**INFORMATION IS
ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDING
GOOD PUBLIC SERVICES**

COMMON RECORDS MANAGEMENT MISTAKES

- Keeping too many records
- Keeping them in inappropriate formats
- Keeping them too long
- Keeping them in inappropriate places
- Not knowing what you have or where it is

CAUSES OF POOR PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- Inadequate funding and staffing to maintain inactive records
- Inadequate management attention
- Poor organization of files
- Poor labeling and indexing
- Uncontrolled growth of records
- Frequent missing and lost records
- Poor trained files personnel
- No formal written procedures

THE PROBLEMS OF POOR PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- Public records are at risk
- City and County building design is often inadequate for storage of records
- Inadequate records program
- Costs of time, neglect, and lack of maintenance

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

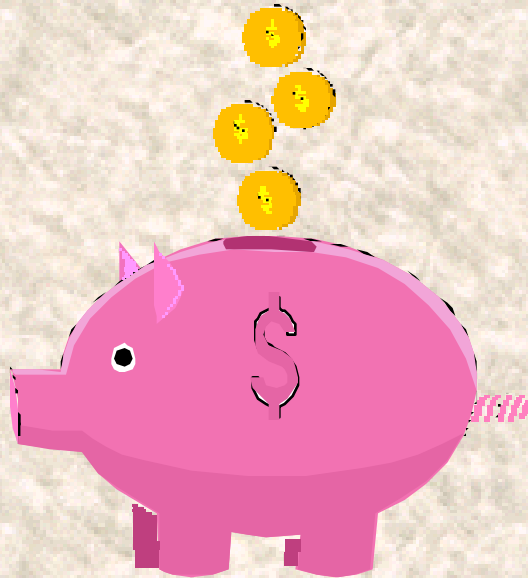
- Clearly written policy which does not leave public records decisions up to staff and local officials
- Records retention schedules
- Appropriate storage containers
- Proper indexing
- Organized storage
- Facility that conforms to storage of public records standards

THE SOLUTION

- Provide a low cost centralized records center
- Use open shelving to maximize use of space and reduce cost
- Allows for orderly arrangement and control of records
- Employs procedures which assure prompt and efficient handling of records
- Take advantage of State Archives services

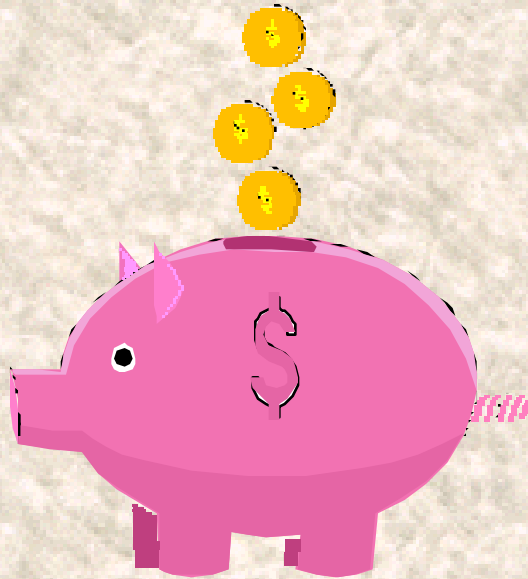
IS IT WORTH IT?

A 1998 COOPERS & LYBAND STUDY SHOWS THAT:



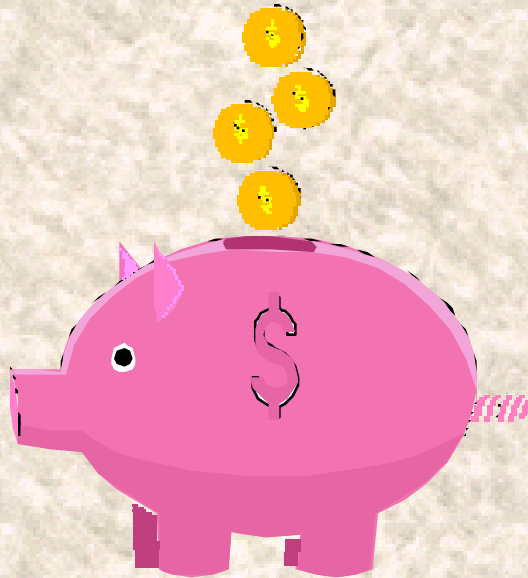
- Records and information systems often represent 50% of the total cost of doing business

IS IT WORTH IT?



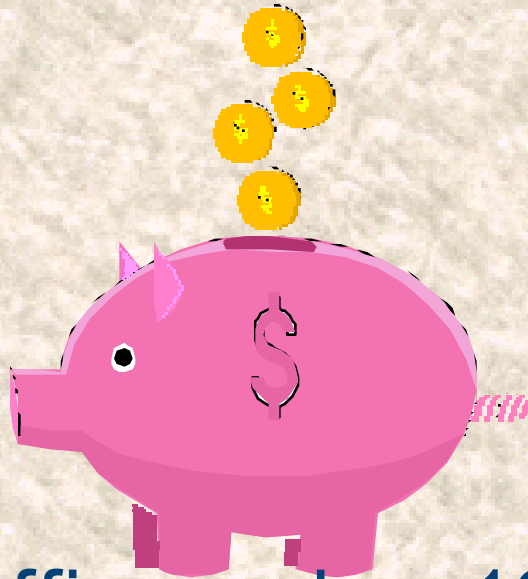
- The typical file grows at a rate of more than 20% annually.

IS IT WORTH IT?



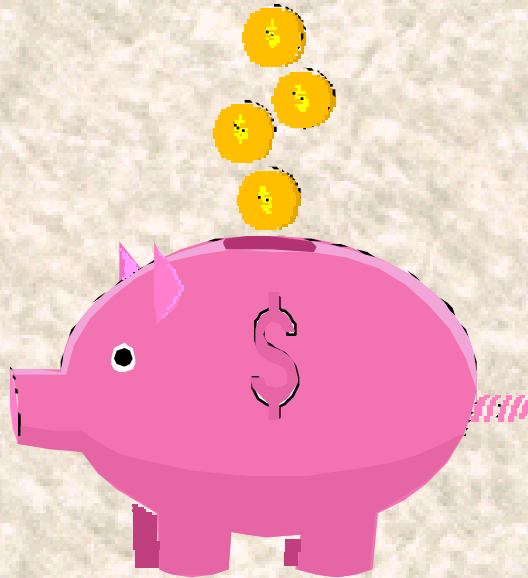
- The average office loses 1 out of 20 office documents (5%). It then costs \$120 to search for the document; \$250 to recreate it if lost (1 lost document = \$370)

IS IT WORTH IT?



- The average office makes 19 copies of each document. It costs the office \$20 to file each document, \$1.50 to retrieve each document ($\$20 \times 19 \text{ copies} = \380 to file)

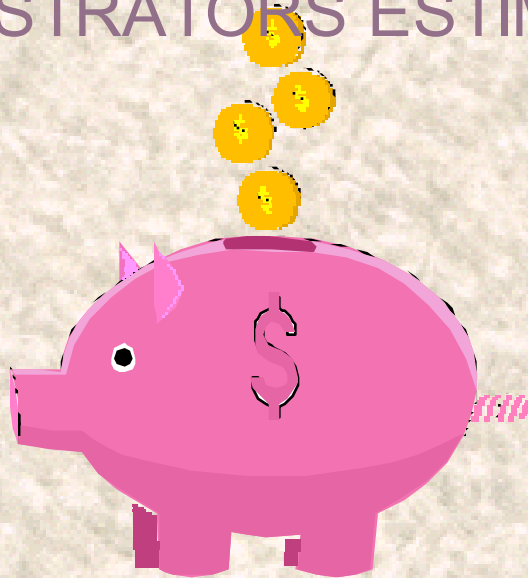
IS IT WORTH IT?



- ONE CUBIC FOOT OF RECORDS STORAGE RESULTS IN AN AVERAGE SAVINGS OF \$16.08 IN OFFICE SPACE

IS IT WORTH IT?

THE ASSOCIATION OF RECORDS MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ESTIMATES:



- Most offices waste 65 cents of every dollar spent in handling records. Since 80% of all office activity is recordkeeping...

**HOW MUCH LONGER
CAN WE AFFORD**



**POOR PUBLIC RECORDS
MANAGEMENT?**

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE PROVIDED INFORMATION USED IN THIS PRESENTATION:

- Academy of Certified Archivists
- Association of Records Managers and Administrators, International
- Council of State Historical Records Coordinators
- Idaho Public Records Law Manual, Idaho State Office of the Attorney General

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE PROVIDED INFORMATION USED IN THIS PRESENTATION:

- Idaho State Historical Records Advisory Board
- International Institute of Municipal Clerks
- National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators
- National Historical Publications and Records Commission
- Society of American Archivists